

Bicycle association

A nonprofit civic association that advocates for bike improvements in street design and often collaborates with city transportation officials in co-design. Bicycle associations also organize rides, celebrations and other cultural events.

History

- *pre-1990s*: the bicycle movement has a long history, though it was interrupted by extended periods of quiescence. The revival of bicycle associations in the 1970s was impeded by divisions within the movement between elitist high-performance cyclists and utilitarian cyclists focused on bike lanes for travel to work, school, and shopping.

References:

Bruce D. Epperson, *Bicycles in American Highway Planning: The Critical Years of Decision-Making, 1969-1991* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2014).

Bruce D. Epperson, “The Great Schism: Federal Bicycle Safety Regulation and the Unraveling of American Bicycle Planning,” *Transportation Law Journal* 37 (2010): 73-118.

James Longhurst, *Bike Battles: A History of Sharing the American Road* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2015).

- *1990s and beyond*: a period of significant and sustained growth begins. Militant organizing through Critical Mass shifted to greater collaboration with city transportation departments. Several factors help account for this:
 - *democratic local politics*: mayors and city councils proved responsive to some of the militant tactics and concrete demands of bicycle associations, convened public forums, and instructed their transportation planners to meet with them.
 - *national funding*: significant federal funding became available for bicycle, pedestrian, rails-to-trails, and similar enhancements through the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA, 1991) and its successor laws. These laws also required public participation. Together, the legal mandates and funding incentives have encouraged further civic action, thus providing “participatory policy feedback.”
 - *new professional association*: the National Association of City Transportation Officials ([NACTO](#)) was founded in 1995 and as of June 2020 comprises 84 North American cities and transit agencies. It has been responsive to multimodal transportation options, as well as to a wide array of other street design improvements for new urbanism and smart growth. It has also made a core

commitment to [public engagement that counts](#) in bicycle and pedestrian planning and design. Its design guides are beautifully presented and widely utilized.

References:

Jeff Mapes, [Pedalling Revolution](#): *How Cyclists Are Changing American Cities* (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2009).

Carlton Reid, [BIKE BOOM](#): *The Unexpected Resurgence of Cycling* (Washington: Island Press, 2017).

Carmen Sirianni, [Sustainable Cities in American Democracy](#): *From Postwar Urbanism to a Civic Green New Deal* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2020), chapter 4.

Richard F. Weingroff, “Creating a Landmark: The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991,” *Public Roads* 65 (2001): 7-48.

Thomas A. Horan, Hank Dittmar, and Daniel R. Jordan, “ISTEA and the New Era in Transportation Policy: Sustainable Communities from a Federal Initiative,” in Michael E. Kraft and Daniel A. Mazmanian, eds., [Toward Sustainable Communities](#): *Transition and Transformations in Environmental Policy* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), 217-245.

Margaret Weir, Jane Rongerude, and Christopher K. Ansell, “Collaboration is Not Enough: Virtuous Cycles of Reform in Transportation Policy,” *Urban Affairs Review* 44 (2009): 455-489.

John G. Stehlin, [Cyclescapes of the Unequal City](#): *Bicycle Infrastructure and Uneven Development* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2019).

National groups

- [League of American Bicyclists](#): originally the League of American Wheelmen, with strong resistance to utilitarian cycling in demarcated bike lanes. However, its emphasis shifted in the early 2000s in response to local associations, funding opportunities through ISTEA, and competition from the Alliance for Biking and Walking (1996-2016).

Its [2019-2021 Strategic Plan](#) registers further shifts. LAB holds an annual [Bike Summit](#).

Citywide and state bicycle associations

Some examples:

- [San Francisco Bicycle Coalition](#): founded in 1971, but only develops organizational and political capacity in the 1990s, as it responds to political opportunities and broadens its membership. Increasing stress of “transportation justice” in recent years.

SFBC, [*Strategic Plan 2018-2022*](#).

References:

Jason Henderson, [*Street Fight: The Struggle over Urban Mobility in San Francisco*](#) (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2013), chapter 5.

Nicole Foletta and Jason Henderson, [*Low Car\(bon\) Communities: Inspiring Car-Free and Car-Lite Urban Futures*](#) (New York: Routledge, 2016), 40-71.

John G. Stehlin, [*Cyclescapes of the Unequal City: Bicycle Infrastructure and Uneven Development*](#) (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2019).

- [*The Street Trust*](#): previously the Portland Area Bicycle Coalition, then the Bicycle Transportation Alliance (BTA), founded in 1990. The new name expands the scope of activity well beyond bicycles. Bicycle equity has become an important emphasis of its work.

References:

City of Portland, [*Portland Bicycle Plan for 2030*](#) (Portland: Bureau of Transportation, 2010).

Jeff Mapes, [*Pedalling Revolution: How Cyclists Are Changing American Cities*](#) (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2009), 141-168.

Bicycle Transportation Alliance and Oregon Walks, [*Vision Zero: A Unifying Vision for Street Safety for Oregon*](#) (2015).

City of Portland, [*Vision Zero Action Plan: Saving Lives with Safe Streets*](#), 2-year update.

The Street Trust, “The Street Trust Racial Equity Policy Statement” (2017).

Bicycle Transportation Alliance, [*A Blueprint for World-Class Bicycling: Three-Year Status Update and Annual Report*](#) (Portland, 2015).

Melody L. Hoffmann, [*Bike Lanes Are White Lanes: Bicycle Advocacy and Urban Planning*](#) (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2016).

Joe Biel, [*Aftermass: Bicycling in a Post-Critical Mass Portland \(75-Minute Documentary\)*](#) (Portland, OR: Microcosm Publishing DVD, 2013).

Stephen Zavestoski and Julian Agyeman, eds. [*Incomplete Streets: Processes, Practices, and Possibilities*](#) (New York: Routledge, 2014), chapters 10 and 14.

- [Transportation Alternatives](#) (Trans Alt): founded in New York City in 1973, but only developed significant organizational and political capacity in the 1990s. Significant influence when Janette Sadik-Khan becomes transportation commissioner under mayor Michael Bloomberg.

References:

Janette Sadik-Khan and Seth Solomonow, [Streetfight: Handbook for an Urban Revolution](#) (New York: Viking, 2016).

- [Active Transportation Alliance](#): founded in 1985 as the Chicagoland Bicycle Federation, Active Trans now supports bicycling, walking, and public transit “to create healthy, sustainable, and equitable communities.”

Its [2017-2021 Strategic Blueprint](#) outlines its vision of mobility equity, movement mobilization, and partnerships with diverse communities and stakeholders.

- [Cascade Bicycle Club](#): formed in 1970, the club encompasses the state of Washington.

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